

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

All THE YEAR ROUND

A Weekly Journal
CONDUCTED BY
CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED
"Household Words"

No. 202. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12, 1872.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

WILLING TO DIE.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE ROSE AND THE KEY."

CHAPTER VI. A STRANGER APPEARS.

NEXT day Miss Grey and I were walking on the lonely road towards Penruthyn Priory. The sea lies beneath it on the right, and on the left is an old grass-grown bank, shaggy with brambles. Round a clump of ancient trees, that stand at a bend of this green rampart, about a hundred steps before us, came, on a sudden, Mr. Carmel, and a man dressed also in black, slight, but not so tall as he. They were walking at a brisk pace, and the stranger was talking incessantly to his companion.

That did not prevent his observing us, for I saw him slightly touch Mr. Carmel's arm with his elbow as he looked at us.

Mr. Carmel evidently answered a question; and, as he did so, glanced at us; and immediately the stranger resumed his conversation.

They were quickly up to us, and stopped. Mr. Carmel raised his hat, and asked leave to introduce his friend. We bowed, so did the stranger; but Mr. Carmel did not repeat his name very distinctly.

This friend was far from prepossessing. He was of middle height, and narrow-shouldered, what they call "putty-faced," and closely shorn, the region of the beard and whisker being defined in smooth dark blue. He looked about fifty. His movements were short and quick, and restless; he rather stooped, and his face and forehead inclined as if he were looking on the ground. But his eyes were not upon the ground; they were very fierce, but seldom rested for more than a moment on any one object. As he made his bow, rais-

ing his hat from his massive forehead first to me, and afterwards to Miss Grey, his eyes, compressed with those wrinkles with which near-sighted people assist their vision, scrutinised us each with a piercing glance under his black eyebrows. It was a face at once intellectual, mean, and intimidating.

"Walking; nothing like walking, in moderation. You have boating here also, and you drive, of course; which do you like best, Miss Ware?" The stranger spoke with a slightly foreign accent, and, though he smiled, with a harsh and rapid utterance.

I forgot how I answered this, his first question—rather an odd one.

He turned and walked a little way with us.

"Charming country. Heavenly weather. But you must find it rather lonely, living down here. How you must both long for a week in London!"

"For my part, I like this better," I answered. "I don't like London in summer, even in winter I prefer this."

"You have lived here with people you like, I dare say, and for their sakes you love the place?" he mused.

We walked on a little in silence. His words recalled darling Nelly.

This was our favourite walk long ago; it led to what we called the blackberry wilderness, rich in its proper fruit in the late autumn, and in May with banks all covered with cowslips and primroses. A sudden thought, that finds simple associations near, is affecting, and my eyes filled with tears. But with an effort I restrained them. The presence of a stranger, the sense of publicity, seals those fountains. How seldom people cry at the funerals of their beloved! They go through the public rite like an exe-

cution, pale and collected, and return home to break their hearts alone.

"You have been here some months, Miss Grey. You find Miss Ware a very amenable pupil, I venture to believe. I think I know something of physiognomy, and I may congratulate you on a very sweet and docile pupil, eh?"

Laura Grey, governess as she was, looked a little haughtily at this officious gentleman, who, as he put the question, glanced sharply for a moment at her, and then as rapidly at me, as if to see how it told.

"I think—I hope we are very happy together," said Miss Grey. "I can answer for myself."

"Precisely what I expected," said the stranger, taking a pinch of snuff. "I ought to mention that I am a very particular acquaintance, friend, I may say, of Mrs. Ware, and am, therefore, privileged."

Mr. Carmel was walking beside his friend in silence, with his eyes apparently lowered to the ground all this time.

My blood was boiling with indignation at being treated as a mere child by this brusque and impertinent old man. He turned to me.

"I see, by your countenance, young lady, that you respect authority. I think your governess is very fortunate; a dull pupil is a bad bargain, and you are not dull. But a contumacious pupil is utterly intolerable; you are not that, either; you are sweetness and submission itself, eh?"

I felt my cheeks flushing, and I directed on him a glance which, if the fire of ladies' eyes be not altogether a fable, ought at least to have scorched him.

"I have no need of submission, sir. Miss Grey does not think of exercising authority over me. I shall be eighteen my next birthday. I shall be coming out, papa says, in less than a year. I am not treated like a child any longer, sir. I think, Laura, we have walked far enough. Hadn't we better go home? We can take a walk another time—any time would be pleasanter than now."

Without waiting for her answer, I turned, holding my head very high, breathing quickly, and feeling my cheeks in a flame.

The odious stranger, nothing daunted by my dignified resentment, smiled shrewdly, turned about quite unconcernedly, and continued to walk by my side. On my other side was Laura Grey, who told me afterwards that she greatly enjoyed my spirited treatment of his ill-breeding.

She walked by my side, looking straight before her, as I did. Out of the corners of my eyes I saw the impudent old man marching on as if quite unconscious, or, at least, careless of having given the least offence. Beyond him I saw, also, in the same oblique way, Mr. Carmel, walking with downcast eyes as before.

He ought to be ashamed, I thought, of having introduced such a person.

I had not time to think a great deal, before the man of the harsh voice and restless eyes suddenly addressed me again.

"You are coming out, you say, Miss Ware, when you are eighteen?"

I made him no answer.

"You are now seventeen, and a year intervenes," he continued, and turning to Mr. Carmel, "Edwyn, run you down to the house, and tell the man to put my horse to."

So Mr. Carmel crossed the stile at the road-side, and disappeared by the path leading to the stables of Malory.

And then turning again to me, the stranger said:

"Suppose your father and mother have placed you in my sole charge, with a direction to remove you from Malory, and take you under my immediate care and supervision, to-day; you will hold yourself in readiness to depart immediately, attended by a lady appointed to look after you, with the approbation of your parents, eh?"

"No, sir, I'll not go. I'll remain with Miss Grey. I'll not leave Malory," I replied, stopping short, and turning toward him. I felt myself growing very pale, but I spoke with resolution.

"You'll not? what, my good young lady, not if I show you your father's letter?"

"Certainly not. Nothing but violence shall remove me from Malory, until I see papa himself. He certainly would not do anything so cruel," I exclaimed, while my heart sank within me.

He studied my face for a moment with his dark and fiery eyes.

"You are a spirited young lady; a will of your own!" he said. "Then you won't obey your parents?"

"I'll do as I have said," I answered, inwardly quaking.

He addressed Miss Grey now.

"You'll make her do as she's ordered?" said this man, whose looks seemed to me more sinister every moment.

"I really can't. Beside, in a matter of so much importance, I think she is right not to act without seeing her father, or, at least, hearing directly from him."

"Well, I must take my leave," said he. "And I may as well tell you it is a mere mystification; I have no authority, and no wish, to disturb your stay at Malory; and we are not particularly likely ever to meet again; and you'll forgive an old fellow his joke, young ladies?"

With these brusque and eccentric sentences, he raised his hat, and with the activity of a younger man, ran up the bank at the side of the road; and, on the summit, looked about him for a moment, as if he had forgotten us altogether; and then, at his leisure, he descended at the other side, and was quite lost to view.

Laura Grey and I were both staring in the direction in which he had just disappeared. Each, after a time, looked in her companion's face.

"I almost think he's mad!" said Miss Grey.

"What could have possessed Mr. Carmel to introduce such a person to us?" I exclaimed.

"Did you hear his name," I asked, after we had again looked in the direction in which he had gone, without discovering any sign of his return.

"Droqville, I think," she answered.

"Oh! Laura, I am so frightened! Do you think papa can really intend any such thing? He's too kind. I'm sure it is a falsehood."

"It is a joke, he says himself," she answered. "I can't help thinking a very odd joke, and very pointless; and one that did not seem to amuse even himself."

"Then do you think it is true?" I urged, my panic returning.

"Well, I can't think it is true, because, if it were, why should he say it was a joke? We shall soon know. Perhaps Mr. Carmel can enlighten us."

"I thought he seemed in awe of that man," I said.

"So did I," answered Miss Grey. "Perhaps he is his superior."

"I'll write to-day to papa, and tell him all about it; you shall help me; and I'll implore of him not to think of anything so horrible and cruel."

Laura Grey stopped short, and laid her hand on my wrist for a moment, thinking.

"Perhaps it would be as well if we were to turn about and walk a little further, so as to give him time to get quite away."

"But if he wants to take me away in that carriage, or whatever it is, he'll wait any time for my return."

"So he would, but the more I think over

it, the more persuaded I am that there is nothing in it."

"In any case, I'll go back," I said. "Let us go into the house and lock the doors; and if that odious Mr. Droqville attempts to force his way in, Thomas Jones will knock him down, and we'll send Anne Owen to Cardyllion for Williams, the policeman. I hate suspense. If there is to be anything unpleasant, it is better to have it decided, one way or other, as soon as possible."

Laura Grey smiled, and spoke merrily of our apprehensions; but I don't think she was quite so much at ease as she assumed to be.

Thus we turned about, I, at least, with a heart thumping very fast, and we walked back towards the old house of Malory, where, as you have this moment heard, we had made up our minds to stand a siege.

CHAPTER VII. TASSO.

I DARE say I was a great fool; but if you had seen the peculiar and unpleasant face of Monsieur Droqville, and heard his harsh nasal voice, in which there was something of habitual scorn, you would make excuses. I confess I was in a great fright by the time we had got well into the dark avenue that leads up to the house.

I hesitated a little as we reached that point in the carriage-road, not a long one, which commands a clear view of the hall-door steps. I had heard awful stories of foolish girls spirited away to convents, and never heard of more. I have doubts as to whether, had I seen Monsieur Droqville or his carriage there, I should not have turned about, and run through the trees. But the court-yard, in front of the house was, as usual, empty and still; on its gravel surface reposed the sharp shadows of the pointed gables above, and the tufts of grass on its surface had not been bruised by recent carriage wheels. Instead, therefore, of taking to flight, I hurried forward, accompanied by Laura Grey, to seize the fortress before it was actually threatened.

In we ran, lightly, and locked the hall-door, and drew chain and bolt against Monsieur Droqville; and up the great stairs to our room, each infected by the other's panic. Safely in the room, we locked and bolted our door, and stood listening, until we had recovered breath. Then I rang our bell furiously, and up came Anne Owen, or, as her countrymen pronounce it, Anne Wan. There had been, after all, no attack;

no human being had attempted to intrude upon our cloistered solitude.

"Where is Mrs. Torkill?" I asked, through the door.

"In the still-room, please miss."

"Well, you must lock and bolt the back door, and don't let any one in, either way."

We passed an hour in this state of preparation, and, finally, ventured down-stairs, and saw Rebecca Torkill.

From her we learned that the strange gentleman who had been with Mr. Carmel had driven away more than half an hour before; and Laura Grey and I, looking in one another's faces, could not help laughing a little.

Rebecca had overheard a portion of a conversation, which she related to me; but not for years after. At the time she had not an idea that it could refer to any one in whom she was interested, and even at this hour I am not myself absolutely certain, but only conjecture, that I was the subject of their talk.

I will tell it to you as nearly as I can recollect.

Rebecca Torkill, nearly an hour before, being in the still-room, heard voices near the window, and quietly peeped out.

You must know that immediately in the angle formed by the junction of the old house, known as the steward's house, which Mr. Carmel had been assigned for a residence, and the rear of the great house of Malory, stand two or three great trees, and a screen of yews, behind which, so embosomed in ivy, as to have the effect of a background of wood, stands the gable of the still-room. This strip of ground, lying immediately in the rear of the steward's house, was a flower-garden; but a part of it is now carpeted with grass, and lies under the shadow of the great trees, and walled round with the dark evergreens I have mentioned. The rear of the stable-yard of Malory, also mantled with ivy, runs parallel to the back of the steward's house, and forms the other boundary of this little enclosure, which simulates the seclusion of a cloister; and but for the one well-screened window I have mentioned, would really possess it.

Standing near this window, she saw Mr. Carmel, whom she always regarded with suspicion, and his visitor, that gentleman in black, whose looks nobody seemed to like.

"I told you, sir," said Mr. Carmel, "through my friend Ambrose, I had

arranged to have prayers twice a week at the church, in Paris, for that one soul."

"Yes, yes, yes; that is all very well, very good, of course," answered the hard voice; "but there are things we must do for ourselves—the saints won't shave us, you know."

"I am afraid, sir, I did not quite understand your letter," said Mr. Carmel.

"Yes, you did, pretty well. You see she may be, one day, a very important acquisition. It is time you put your shoulder to the wheel—d'ye see? Put your shoulder to the wheel. The man who said all that is able to do it. So, mind, you put your shoulder to the wheel forthwith."

The younger man bowed.

"You have been sleeping," said the harsh, peremptory voice. "You said there was enthusiasm and imagination. I take that for granted. I find there is spirit, courage, a strong will; obstinacy—impracticability—no milksop—a bit of a virago! Why did not you make out all that for yourself? To discover character you must apply tests. You ought in a single conversation to know everything."

The young man bowed again.

"You shall write to me, weekly, but don't post your letters at Cardyllion. I'll write to you through Hickman, in the old way."

She could hear no more, for they moved away. The elder man continued talking, and looked up at the back windows of Malory, which became visible as they moved away. It was one of his fierce, rapid glances; but he was satisfied, and continued his conversation for two or three minutes more. Then, he abruptly turned, and entered the steward's house quickly; and, in two or three minutes more, was driving away from Malory at a rapid pace.

A few days after this adventure—for in our life any occurrence that could be talked over for ten minutes was an adventure—I had a letter in mamma's pretty hand, and in it occurred this passage:

"The other day I wrote to Mr. Carmel, and I asked him to do me a kindness. If he would read a little Italian with you, and Miss Grey I am sure would join, I should be so very much pleased. He has passed so much of his life in Rome, and is so accomplished an Italian; simple as people think it, that language is more difficult to pronounce correctly even than French. I forgot whether Miss Grey mentioned Italian among the languages she could teach. But however that may be, I think if Mr. Carmel

will take that trouble, it would be very desirable."

Mr. Carmel, however, made no sign.

If the injunction to "put his shoulder to the wheel" had been given for my behoof, the promise was but indifferently kept, for I did not see Mr. Carmel again for a fortnight.

During the greater part of that interval he was away from Malory, we could not learn where.

At the end of that time, one evening, just as unexpectedly as before, he presented himself at the window. Very much the same thing happened. He drank tea with us, and sat on the bench—his bench, he called it—outside the window, and remained, I am sure, two hours, chatting very agreeably. You may be sure we did not lose the opportunity of trying to learn something of the gentleman whom he had introduced to us.

Yes, his name was Droqville.

"We fancied," said Laura, "that he might be an ecclesiastic."

"His being a priest, or not, I am sure you think does not matter much, provided he is a good man, and he is that; and a very clever man, also," answered Mr. Carmel: "he is a great linguist: he has been in almost every country in the world. I don't think Miss Ethel has been a traveller yet, but you have, I dare say." And in that way he led us quietly away from Monsieur Droqville to Antwerp, and I know not where else.

One result, however, did come of this visit. He actually offered his services to read Italian with us. Not, of course, without opening the way for this by directing our talk upon kindred subjects, and thus deviously up to the point. Miss Grey and I, who knew what each expected, were afraid to look at each other; we should certainly have laughed, while he was leading us up so circuitously and adroitly to his "palpable ambuscade."

We settled Monday, Wednesday, and Friday in each week for our little evening readings.

Mr. Carmel did not always now sit outside, upon his bench, as at first. He was often at our tea-table, like one of ourselves; and sometimes stayed later than he used to do. I thought him quite delightful. He certainly was clever, and, to me, appeared a miracle of learning; he was agreeable, fluent, and very peculiar.

I could not tell whether he was the coldest man on earth, or the most impassioned. His eyes seemed to me more

enthusiastic and extraordinary the oftener and the longer I beheld them. Their strange effect, instead of losing, seemed to gain by habit and observation. It seemed to me that the cold and melancholy serenity that held us aloof was artificial, and that underneath it could be detected the play and fire of a nature totally different.

I was always fluctuating in my judgment upon this issue; and the problem occupied me during many an hour of meditation.

How dull the alternate days had become; and how pleasant even the look-forward to our little meetings! Thus, very agreeably, for about a fortnight our readings proceeded, and, one evening, on our return, expecting the immediate arrival of our "master," as I called Mr. Carmel, we found, instead, a note addressed to Miss Grey. It began: "Dear Miss Eth," and across these three letters a line was drawn, and "Grey" was supplied. I liked even that evidence that his first thought had been of me. It went on:

"Duty, I regret, calls me for a time away from Malory, and our Italian readings. I have but a minute to write to tell you not to expect me this evening, and to say I regret that I am unable, at this moment, to name the day of my return.

"In great haste, and with many regrets,
"Yours very truly,
"E. CARMEL."

"So he's gone again!" I said, very much vexed. "What shall we do to-night?"

"Whatever you like best; I don't care—I'm sorry he's gone."

"How restless he is! I wonder why he could not stay quietly here; he can't have any real business away. It may be duty; but it looks very like idleness. I dare say he began to think it a bore coming to us so often to read Tasso, and listen to my nonsense; and I think it a very cool note, don't you?"

"Not cool; a little cold; but not colder than he is," said Laura Grey. "He'll come back, when he has done his business; I'm sure he has business; why should he tell an untruth about the matter?"

I was huffed at his going, and more at his note. That pale face, and those large eyes, I thought the handsomest in the world.

I took up one of Laura's manuals of The Controversy, which had fallen rather into disuse, after the first panic had subsided, and Mr. Carmel had failed to make any, even the slightest attack upon our

faith. I was fiddling with its leaves, and I said :

"If I were an inexperienced young priest, Laura, I should be horribly afraid of those little tea-parties. I dare say he is afraid —afraid of your eyes, and of falling in love with you."

"Certainly not with me," she answered. "Perhaps you mean he is afraid of people talking? I think you and I should be the persons to object to that, if there were a possibility of any such thing. But, we are talking folly. These men meet us, and talk to us, and we see them; but there is a medium between, that is simply impassable. Suppose a sheet of plate glass, through which you see as clearly as through air, but as thick as the floor of ice on which a Dutch fair is held. That is what their vow is."

"I wonder whether a girl ever fell in love with a priest. That would be a tragedy!" I said.

"A ridiculous one," answered Laura; "you remember the old spinster, who fell in love with the Apollo Belvedere? It could happen only to a mad woman."

I think this was a dull evening to Laura Grey; I know it was for me.

THE WHITE HAT AND ITS OWNER.

SYDNEY SMITH, in a letter to Francis Horner, tells him of the arrival of Jeffrey in London, and adds, that the editor of the Edinburgh Review "has brought his adjectives with him." Jeffrey's predilection for that particular part of speech, whether in writing or in conversation, was the subject of amiable joke among his friends. Similarly, Mr. Horace Greeley's white hat has become a sort of proverb among Americans. His individuality appears almost to have merged into this article of attire. We read in the New York papers that "The white hat and its owner (Mr. Greeley) arrived" at such and such a place. And second only in importance, in the eyes of his countrymen, to the Sage of Chappaqua's hat, are his boots and his trousers. At the present moment all three are playing a prominent part in the politics of the United States, and it is both curious and amusing to note how these personal belongings and peculiarities of the Democratic candidate for the presidency are regarded and discussed by his friends on the one hand, and his foes on the other. It would seem as if Mr. Greeley's eccentricity in dress were held by his enthusiastic supporters to be one of the many merits of their candidate.

They consider it a mark of his genius, a sign of his disinterestedness of self, which they like. The Republican canvass, if we are to believe the Democrats, consists of derision of Mr. Greeley's clothes; but say they jocularly, "a white hat and the White House go very well together." Per contra, the Republicans retort, that the editor of the Tribune is opposed as a candidate, not because of his hat and his boots, but because he is peculiarly unfit for the office. Even in this matter of costume, however, he is not, we are told, the "simple child of nature" his friends would have us believe. There is a method in his negligence; and his careful carelessness in dress, like his arrival at public meetings in the middle of the proceedings, when his appearance will be most remarked and cheered, is set down as merely a sign of a harmless vanity and restless desire for notoriety. Indeed, one candid friend boldly asserts that he saw Greeley, "in 1860, in Chicago, while in company with two other gentlemen, who also laughed at him, go behind the door of the barber's shop in the hotel, and carefully adjust his trousers in the inside of his boots." Whatever may be the motive power which prompts him to adopt this singular pantaloonic arrangement—and we do not profess to know it—certain it is, that Horace Greeley's old chapeau blanc and boots bid fair to become as historically celebrated, on the other side of the Atlantic, as Lord Brougham's plaid trousers or Beau Brummell's white cravats are on this.

No less amusing is it to read the political estimates of the man as drawn by rival politicians. Among his admirers Greeley is familiarly and affectionately known as Old Horace, Old Honesty, Old Honest Horace, the Honest Old Farmer, the Old Man, Old White Hat, Old Tree Chopper, Our Honest Old Uncle, the Sage of Chappaqua, the Doctor, Our Later Franklin, and Our Modern Cincinnatus. His enemies have added any number of less endearing epithets to the list; as for example, Old Bail-bonds, and Old Four Hundred Millions, suggestive of the offer to Mr. Lincoln to buy peace; Old Let 'em Go; Old Away with Lincoln, playfully significant of the Greeley proposition to set that president aside in 1864; Old Villain-you-lie, epitomising the journalist's direct and sinewy Saxon familiarly addressed to those with whom he differs. The wit here is not of a very brilliant order, it must be confessed, but it serves to show the manner in which electioneering contests and journalistic warfare are conducted in the United States,

where party feeling runs much higher than with us, and where personalities are heaped upon opponents with a liberality altogether foreign to English notions. Here, for instance, is a pen and ink portrait of the man whom his friends delight in designating as Old Honesty and Our Late Franklin. The sketch is by the present Mayor of New York.

"He (Greeley) is feeble of purpose, tremulous in judgment, unstable and inconsistent in thought and deed, doing motiveless things, telling motiveless falsehoods, friendly with a man one moment and unfriendly the next, eccentric in dress, eccentric in eating and drinking, devoured by the worm of self-consciousness, full of unaccountable idiosyncrasies and prejudices and awkward affectations; uncertain of religious opinions, he is one day prayerful, and the next day wildly blasphemous; one moment he is calm, the next furious. His craving for notoriety is a symptom of a madman. . . . He must periodically run for some office every autumn, and it don't much matter what it is. The last time he ran for Congress it was in a lower district. He once had some idea of going to Virginia to run for United States senator. All these erratic movements show insanity."

Verily there is license as well as liberty of speech among our American cousins. The great indictment against Greeley is that of being a turncoat politician; that, having nearly all his life written bitterly and uncompromisingly against the Democratic party, which he has compendiously described as "lovers of rum and haters of niggers," "shoulder-hitters," "cock-fighters," "dog-fanciers," "rowdies," "burglars," "thieves," and so forth, he is now the chosen candidate of that very party whose motto is "Anything to beat Grant." With the truth or untruth of this charge we are not concerned.

To quote the memorable saying of Mr. Jefferson Brick, Mr. Greeley is undoubtedly "one of the most remarkable men in the country," as he certainly is just now the best abused and caricatured man in it. He is, in every sense of the word, self-made. Born at Amherst, New Hampshire, on the 3rd of February, 1811, his father, a poor farmer, was only able to give him the advantages of a common education, and very little of that. But his energy, ambition, and capacity supplied all deficiencies, and enabled him to push his way from obscurity to the prominent position he now occupies. He lived with his parents until he was fifteen years of age, "going to school a

little, and working on the farm a great deal," when, in consequence of his father's failure, and the enforced sale of the farm, young Greeley became an apprentice in a newspaper office, the Northern Spectator, at East Poultney, Vermont, whither the family had migrated. After remaining here for four years, he went to New York, and obtained employment with a printer in Chatham-street. This was in 1831. Two years subsequently Greeley made his first business venture as a partner in a daily paper, the Morning Post, which, however, only lived for about a month. He next started the New Yorker, a weekly, and in a short time became widely known as a newspaper writer. But neither was this paper a success financially, and we find that on the 10th of April, 1841, Mr. Greeley, almost moneyless and unaided, issued the first number of the journal with which his name is so intimately associated. It is noteworthy that six years previously the New York Herald had been established by the late Mr. James Gordon Bennett, under even less encouraging circumstances.

In 1848 Greeley was elected to Congress, and served from December of that year till March, 1849. His congressional career was not a brilliant one. In 1857 he made a voyage to Europe, and during his visit to England acted as a jurymen at the Great Exhibition. On his return to America he published a not very remarkable volume, giving his impressions of the Old World. During the political excitement which immediately preceded the outbreak of the Southern rebellion, Mr. Greeley, in common with many prominent members of the Democratic party, says one of his critics, "took the ground that the disaffected states should be permitted to depart in peace, if a majority of their inhabitants desired separation, and form a new government for themselves. On the actual occurrence of hostilities, however, he gave the national administration a warm support; though several times during the progress of the war, when disasters had overtaken the national forces in the field, and the issue of the campaign was wavering in the balance, he appeared to lose heart and to be ready to give up the contest on almost any terms that could be obtained. It is fortunate for the nation," adds this Republican journalist, "that his views were not shared by the dominant party at the North; and doubtless Mr. Greeley himself is now well satisfied that his counsels were disregarded." His History of the Struggle for Slavery Extension and Restriction

from 1787 to 1856, and his Hints toward Reform, are nevertheless considered important contributions to the political literature of his country. Greeley's latest work is called, What I Know About Farming, an unlucky title, as events have turned out, inasmuch as the author's political foes are never weary of parodying it in a humorously effective manner as a weapon of the campaign. Thus, not a number of Harper's Weekly has appeared for many months without a cartoon from the trenchant pencil of Thomas Nast, with some such title as, What I Know About Stooping to Conquer; What I Know About Resisting Temptation; What I Know About Splitting; What I Know About Honesty; What I Know About Myself; and, What I Don't Know. As a specimen of the banter indulged in, take the following, apropos of the agricultural experiences of the modern Cincinnatus: "In an agricultural essay on tobacco, H. G. asserts that the fine-cut will not ripen well unless the tinfoil is stripped from the growing bud early in the spring, and that plug tobacco ought to be knocked off the trees with clubs, instead of being picked off with the hand." This is not a bad illustration of the truth of the remark that it is the essence of an American joke that it should be read like a dry solemn statement of fact.

Among Mr. Greeley's other accomplishments it seems that good penmanship cannot possibly be included. In fact his handwriting must be atrociously and irremediably bad, if half the stories told about it are true. He once, it is said, wrote an editorial headed "William H. Seward," and was highly enraged when the proof came to him under the title of "Richard the Third." Again he wrote about "freemen in buckram," and the prosaic typesetter converted the phrase into "three men in a back room." Yet it is stated as a fact that two compositors of sagacity and experience are employed in the office of the Tribune at an extra salary, because they can read his copy. His brother journalists have been for years cracking jokes at the expense of Old Honest Horace on this score. One says that the editor of the Tribune once tried to make a living as a writing-master, and failed. His copy was "Virtue is its own reward," and the scholars got it, "Washing with water is absurd." Another journalist describes a letter of his as looking "as if somebody had smashed a bottle of ink on the paper, and tried to wipe it off with a curry-comb." We must leave the reader to judge for himself whether the

subjoined correspondence from an American paper gives any countenance to the very original description just quoted.

FROM H. GREELEY TO M. B. CASTLE, SANDWICH, ILL.

DEAR SIR,—I am overworked and growing old. I shall be sixty next Feb. 3. On the whole, it seems I must decline to lecture henceforth except in this immediate vicinity, if I do at all. I cannot promise to visit Illinois on that errand—certainly not now.

Yours,

HORACE GREELEY.

FROM M. B. CASTLE TO H. GREELEY, NEW YORK TRIBUNE.

DEAR SIR,—Your acceptance to lecture before our association next winter came to hand this morning. Your penmanship not being the plainest, it took some time to translate it, but we succeeded, and would say your time, "3rd February," and terms "sixty dollars," are entirely satisfactory. As you suggest, we may be able to get you other engagements in this immediate vicinity; if so, we will advise you.

Yours respectfully,

M. B. CASTLE.

If the above be genuine, the clerks at the White House may, should Mr. Greeley be successful in the presidential contest, have some trouble in store to decipher their chief's despatches. Some time ago a cashier of the New York Post-office turned out a defaulter, and the United States Government came down on his securities—among whom was Horace Greeley—for about thirty thousand dollars. Greeley was very restive under this obligation, and he is so much in fear of debt that he wanted, it is said, to give a cheque for the whole sum, and get the matter off his mind. Finally, a meeting of the indorsers was held, and Greeley put on his spectacles, took up his bond, and dolefully read over the conditions. "They say I write an infernally* bad hand," remarked the journalist, "but

* "I find many of our orthodox Republicans have the notion that Greeley is an infidel. Now, I believe him to be a Christian. He is a communicant of Doctor Chapin's church, and believes in the ultimate restoration of all God's children, here or hereafter. I suppose he has used some profane language. But so has Grant, and so has Wilson [the Republican candidate for Vice-President] to a far greater extent than ever Mr. Greeley did; for he is not habitually profane; even Washington and Jackson were guilty of the same. I do not consider this an evidence of piety, but neither is it evidence that one is not right at heart, and many a Christian, witnessing great injustice, feels swear if he don't utter it." — *Letter of the Reverend Henry Ward Beecher.*

they can read it plain enough when it gets on one of these things." Our Late Franklin had the best of it on that occasion. Altogether this man is an interesting study, and we should like to hear Mr. Carlyle's opinion of him from a Von Teufelsdröckh point of view.

AT LES HIRONDELLES.

I SAID, "If there's peace to be found in the world, the heart that is weary might hope for it here!"

The remark could not strictly lay claim to originality; but really it was justified by the appearance of the place. Perhaps it would have been more to the purpose to say, "the brain that is weary;" for that is more generally the weariness for which we nineteenth century men seek alleviation. Well, the brain that is weary could hardly seek repose and recreation in a more promising spot than that which I am about very briefly to introduce to the notice of the readers of *ALL THE YEAR ROUND*.

Take a ticket to Lausanne on the shores of Lake Leman—a little more than twenty-four hours will carry you thither from Charing Cross—then take the rail from Lausanne to the little station and town of Aigle, some seventy minutes, and then "first turning to the left!" This sharp first turn, on leaving the rail at Aigle, takes you out of the great valley of the Rhone, along which the rail runs, into the narrow side valley known as Les Ormonts. The journey from Charing Cross thus far will cost, it may be mentioned, travelling, first class, by Dover and Calais, about six pounds.

Thus far the traveller will have seen much beautiful scenery; but he will have found nothing of rest, or peace, or repose. The whole of the lovely northern bank of Lake Leman is, in the months of July, August, and September, one huge Vanity Fair. Luxurious and really admirably conducted hotels by the dozen invite the holiday maker to bed and board at about seven francs a day. Young men and maidens, alpenstock in hand, and got up with rigorous care according to the most approved Alpine Club prescriptions, are continually making ascents of the smooth little hills on the shores of the lake; and belles from Broadway are always on view, exhibiting three or four undeniably Parisian toilets per diem in the promenades. There is Clarens, the birthplace of deep love! And how should it be anything else, when you saunter

through its groves in company with a pair of bright eyes under a coquettish Swiss hat, and a trim little figure on boot-heels three inches high, steadied by a very necessary alpenstock? There is the Bosquet de Julie—Rousseau's Julie—turned into the sign of a cabaret, where you may sip parfait amour, while you gaze over the deep blue waters towards Meilleraie. All very admirable and charming. Observe, however, that lovely Leman lies under a blazing sun; that in the holiday months all this beautiful south-looking coast is frightfully hot; and if you wish for freshness and cool bracing breezes, as well as for peace and rest, you will do well to treat all this dusty and crowded region with a Dantescan *guarda e passa, rush on per rail, and take, as I have said, the first turn to the left at Aigle.*

Here, if you are disposed for as delightful a walk of twelve miles as ever you saw in your life, consign your impediments to the post-master to be sent after you, and take your way up the valley on foot. If that don't suit you, hire a one-horse car for sixteen francs to make the journey, which will in either case occupy about four hours. For almost the whole of the twelve miles is up hill, some of the distance very steep, and the car will rarely go faster than a walk. No sooner have you turned your back on the valley of the Rhone than you find yourself amid scenery of a totally different character, and very shortly in a totally different climate. You very soon begin to ascend very rapidly, zig-zaging up the almost precipitous side of the narrow valley, amid extensive pine-woods, through which you constantly hear the roaring of the stream finding its troubled way into the Rhone, at a great distance below you. This stream is *La Grand' Eau*, so called, it must be supposed, on the *lucus a non lucendo* principle, from the smallness of its body of water in proportion to that of the great river towards which it is hurrying with such headlong haste. This *Grand' Eau* has its rise in the glaciers of the Diablerets at the head of the valley. For some six or seven miles from Aigle, the traveller continues his rapidly ascending route through almost continuous fir-woods, mingled, to the great increase of their beauty, with some patches of beech. The sides of the narrow gorge, for it is nothing more than that, are in this part of the valley almost precipitous; and the road has been carried up and along the left-hand side (going up) not without considerable engineering difficulties, and at a cost which

was a very heavy one for the resources of the canton. At every step the character of the scenery becomes more grandiose; and an increasing feeling of plunging into mountain fastnesses which shut him out from all the world behind him comes over the stranger.

At the end of six or seven miles the mountain village of Le Sepey is reached, most picturesquely niched into the angle of the valley formed by the embouchure of a gorge falling into the main valley on the left. Le Sepey is the capital of Ormont Dessous. It has two or three very fair little inns, and its position is tempting. Nevertheless the traveller would do well to resist the temptation of drawing rein (save for the slaking of his thirst with a bottle of the white wine of Yvorne, price one franc, or a draft of the beer of Lausanne, or a teetotalish pull at a flagon of limonade gazeuse), and push on into the upper valley of Ormont Dessus.

After Le Sepey the road mounts rapidly for about half an hour; then makes a sudden plunge downwards through the black shades of a thick pine-forest, till it comes upon a solitary saw-mill, turned by a torrent from the mountains on the left, and then proceeds to mount almost uninterruptedly, though less rapidly, all the way to the head of the valley. The traveller is now in Ormont Dessus, and the character of the landscape is again changed. The valley opens itself somewhat more; the sides are less absolutely precipitous; and the dark fir-woods are alternated by stretches of pastureage of the most brilliant green. Before long the magnificent peaks and glaciers of the Sexrouge, and the Diablerets, the glory of the valley, open on the view. And a little further on, the grand and very remarkable bare walls of the precipitous Tours d'Ay come into view above the hills enclosing the valley through which the traveller has been passing, and appear to complete the absolute shutting in of this high and remote region. The little upland valley of Ormont Dessus is thus a little world by itself; a land really flowing with milk and honey. The steep, but not for the most part precipitous, sides of the lower hills are studded with innumerable chalets, the homes of a numerous but widely-scattered population, engaged almost entirely in the rearing and care of their cattle. These mountain homes are sown broadcast, as it were, over all the green slopes with the utmost irregularity, and apparently motiveless caprice in the choice of each situation. Innumerable rills

of the purest water, in some cases rising to the dignity of torrents, rush down through the pastures and fir-woods, singing their eternal song in treble or in bass, according to the volume of water each is contributing to the Grand' Eau, which is so busily carrying their united contributions to the Rhone. Each of these water-courses, small or great, is fringed as it descends from the bare upper mountains by a border of wood, sometimes pines, and sometimes plane-trees, which diversify and divide the pastures in the most charming manner.

Such are the main features of the locality in which I discovered the haven of rest from city noise, and refuge from summer heat, which I wish to recommend to the notice of my readers.

There are several *pensions* in the valley—as in what valley throughout this playground of Europe, are there not! All of them are of modest pretensions save one, the great Hotel of the Diablerets. It is not this to which I wish to draw my readers' attention. "Mega biblion, mega kakon!" "A big book is a big evil!" said an ancient philosopher. And a tolerable large and long experience of hostellries of all sorts has led the writer to the conclusion that the axiom is about equally true of inns. Most of these big Swiss hotels are owned by companies of shareholders—im-palpable and invisible powers, against which it is impossible to do battle. Mine host is at least a being with human virtues and failings. But a company cannot hear reason. I have that affection for my own human individuality, that I like human beings to recognise me nominatim as one of themselves. It is an abominable offence to be known only as Number 119! Then the aggregation of large crowds necessitates discipline—Procrustian rules—laws which know neither turning nor change! You must go here; and you must not go there! You must do this at such an hour, and something else at another hour! Take your ease in your inn, quotha! Such a notion will soon become the dim tradition of a better time. It were as well to live in a penitentiary as in some of these overgrown caravanserais!

Therefore, when you come near to the head of the valley having all the peaks and glaciers of the Diablerets in full view in front of you, and when you can see the big hotel lying low beneath you among the flats at the very extremity of the valley, about a mile in advance of you, do not go on towards it, but turn short off from the

road to the left, and try Les Hirondelles. The steep zig-zag, which, in about four minutes' walk, leads to the chalet so called, from the road, may be ascended by one of the country cars; and if you have much or many impedimenta, they may be thus dragged up to the gateway of the little garden in front of the house. But you will do well to climb to the swallow's-nest on foot. You are sure not to miss the turning. It is a few yards after you have passed the bright whitewashed little tower of the church of Vers l'Eglise, the capital (!) of Ormont Dessus, lying to your right down in the bottom of the valley; and it is marked by a large green direction-board bearing the pompous inscription, Avenue de la Pension des Hirondelles.

Having accomplished the ascent you find yourself in front of a chalet, built of pine-wood exactly on the same architectural plan as all the other chalets in the valley; somewhat neater, cleaner, brighter, and in better order than those of the general inhabitants of the valley, but essentially the same in construction and idea. Two flights of exterior stairs lead to the first floor; the whole of the ground floor is devoted to a vast salle-à-manger, which serves also as a drawing-room to the inmates, so that when the latter pass from their chambers to the public room, they come out of the front of the building by a door on the first floor, and descend by the al fresco staircase, protected from any inclemency of the weather only by the huge far-projecting gabled roof of the chalet. As for the chambers which occupy the entire two floors above the ground floor—conceive a huge deal packing-case, as white as cleanliness can make it, containing a white deal bedstead, and other needful appurtenances, all of white deal, and all as clean as hands can make them. That is your own private domain, where you may do anything you like save jump. Should you attempt the latter exercise, however bad a jumper you may be, the contact of your head with the top of your packing-case will cause the gentleman who inhabits the packing-case above you to wonder what you are bumping the floor for! And if you never experienced an earthquake, you will know exactly what one feels like, if any stout gentleman in the house should move himself from one side of his box to the other. As to the sleeping accommodation, it is all that can be desired; and, strange as it may seem, the present writer can testify to the fact that repose as profound may be had on a white deal bedstead as on the most splendidly French-

polished one of mahogany. And how one sleeps in this delicious air after a day spent in rambling among the mountains! Sleep! Why even if the man overhead should turn in his bed, you only dream that you are on board ship, and that the vessel has made a tremendous lurch!

But exquisitely balmy as the air may be, and lovely as a dream though all the surroundings may be, you cannot altogether live on them. And it is necessary therefore to say something about the catering. The big inn at the Diablerets boasts, it is rumoured, a French cook, which assuredly our Marie at Les Hirondelles cannot pretend to be. But then the advantage of a French cook, though he may be a cordon bleu, depends very greatly upon what he has to cook. To be sure there is the honour of the thing, as the Irishman said, whose sedan-chair had no bottom to it! But as far as could be judged by the murmurs of certain of the inmates, this did not seem to suffice to make up for certain details of short-commons, which assuredly contrasted very unfavourably with the housekeeping of our host at Les Hirondelles. Monsieur Schneiter his name is. And certainly that must be admitted to have been a day of triumph for his notable and liberal wife, when a party of ladies at the gr-r-r-and hotel at the Diablerets sorrowfully confided to a lady friend located at Les Hirondelles the miserable fact, that they never had any cream, either with their tea, or with their fruit, and begged the happy Hirondellian to bring from the abundance of the unpretending chalet a supply of cream for a strawberry feast! Surely Madame Schneiter may be excused if she was a proud woman, when in obedience to this request, she prepared a goodly bottle for the purpose, taking care to fill it to the cork, lest the journey to the Diablerets should churn it into butter? Ah! if only the cream-bowls, which daily leave our table unexhausted, could be dispensed to these unhappy victims of splendour at the grand hotel!

And then the butter! To think that such sad secrets of domestic sorrows should burst their prison-house in those lofty walls, and go, as it were, echoing down the valley in sorrowful reverberations! But there are murmuring voices, which speak of Vaux-hall-like pats of butter, mere superficies without thickness, served out numerically according to the counting of noses, with reply made to any, who, Oliver-like, should rebelliously ask for more—in terms very similar to those used to him. Whereas we

at Les Hirondelles revel in butter ad libitum brought forth in a lordly dish ! In short it is sufficient to observe that in the matter of provisions, the Hirondellian scheme of life is most irreproachably liberal ; and it is but justice that intending pensionnaires should be told as much.

Of course no pension would suit the views of those whose purpose it is to see as much of Switzerland as they can within the limits of their holiday. But to those who are content to seek the repose of a life as contrasted, as it is possible to conceive, with that of the heat, turmoil, noise, and business of cities—a life which is especially adapted to recreate the overtired brain and weary nerves—a purity of atmosphere, which is in itself a delight never-ending, and is half the battle as regards repairing the wear and tear of town life—it is doing a real service to bid them try Les Hirondelles.

And, by-the-bye, in these days of meat costing a shilling a pound, and coals worth, according to the last quotations, something near about their weight in gold, it may not be amiss to mention that all the advantages above promised may be enjoyed for the sum of three francs and a half per diem, which together with, say, another franc for your wine—very fair Macon—and your chamber-lights, and a modest tip to the neat-handed Phillis who waits on you, makes all expenses told just forty-five pence per diem.

MIGNONETTE.

THAT low white wicket ! As the sun went down, I bent above it, drawn by such a wist
- Of sweet, soul-freshening fragrance, as is blown From yon small grave. A single golden shaft, Thridding the dusky cedars, touched a form Still, snowy-vestured, ghostly in the gloom. Peace, silence, fragrance ! In the troubled storm Of such unrestful life as is my doom, Those hours at least were halcyon. Let me yet Steal solace from their memory, Mignonette !

That small soft hand, warm, white, the very dove Of peace to me, how ably forth it stole With its sweet burden. Ah ! my little love, How shouldst thou know the value of thy dole ? A bunch of brown sweet blossoms; and they turned The current of a life that set to death, Thou didst not guess the bitter fire that burned Within my bosom, while thy peaceful breath Fanned the uplifted hand those sweet dew-wet Brown blossoms made to tremble, Mignonette !

Thou wert not lovely little one, thy face Was but a simple face with soft brown eyes. Thou wert but dowered with a bird-like grace, A silver voice low-set to pure replies. Yet sweet, yet stainless, yet serene and strong, The spirit that informed thee. Thou to me Art ever as thy flower; to thee belong Sweetness, and solace, and sure constancy. My little darling ! Would these eyes, tear-wet, Might see thee through the shadows, Mignonette !

Thou wert no April girl, whose smiles and tears Were swift as sun and shadow on a plain Wind-blown in gusty spring. Nor soulless fears, Nor shallow joys were thine. So didst thou gain Sweet empire o'er a soul that passion's wars Had scarred and stained. Oh ! darling, would that I Could lift my eyes to yonder stainless stars, And feel no sting in their calm purity.

Say, dost thou know this anguish of regret That wrings the heart that loved thee, Mignonette ?

And thou didst love me ! Doth the bruised flower Love the black storm that breaks and beats it low ? What had I worthy of that priceless dower ? What brought me near thee? Sweet thy blossoms blow And sweetly thou hadst grown, oh ! flower of maids, But for my ill-starred coming. Were these arms A nest for thee ? If those soft evening shades Had hid thee from me sweet, thy winsome charms Full flowering now, though bud-like modest yet, Had blessed a happier lover, Mignonette !

I loved thee, but the curse of early years Clung to me. May he hope for any grace, Who filled those tender eyes with patient tears, Who stole the bloom from that pathetic face ? Loved thee and left thee ! Not again to see The wee brown blossom ; let it fade and fall Though its the sweet soul-healing purity That might have won me from a cursed thrall. Nay my dead darling, that shall win me yet, For dying thou hast conquered, Mignonette !

And now I sit beside thy lonely grave, Wreath'd with the dun-hued flower that was thine own, Blest at the heart of grief once more to have The faint familiar fragrance round me blown. Sweet, pure, so constant ! Oh my darling, bend From those blue heights and bless me ere I go ; That dear dead hand shall hold me to the end, Lo ! love, I pluck one fragrant spray. I know That when we twain shall meet, this fierce regret Shall pass at thy sweet welcome, Mignonette.

BENJAMIN'S DREAM.

"IN the Annals of the Thirty Years' War," said Laurence, "the ancient city of Magdeburg always maintains an unhappy pre-eminence, through the treatment it received at the hands of the Imperialists."

"Ay, it was there that old Tilly earned a bad notoriety, that has done more to render his name immortal than all his excellent qualities as a general," remarked Maximilian.

"Tilly is as naturally associated with Magdeburg as the Duke of Alva with the Netherlands, or Judge Jeffreys with the county of Somerset," observed Edgar.

"And no wonder," said Maximilian. "When an ancient and magnificent city is so completely destroyed that nothing is left but the cathedral, one convent, and a few houses; when men, women, and children are slaughtered and tortured without distinction, by ruffians drawn from the most uncivilised parts of Europe; when the general is, after awhile, asked by his own officers when the scene of horror is to close, and he replies that his soldiers shall have another hour's amusement—when all

this takes place, I say, neither the general nor the town deserves to be forgotten."

"Nay, if I remember right," interposed Edgar, "care has been taken to prevent the memory of man from being guilty of any such injustice; and there is an inscription in the principal street of Magdeburg, bidding the passengers remember the 10th of May, 1631, the day on which the massacre occurred."

"There was not much occasion for the inscription," returned Maximilian, with a sigh; "the human memory is naturally more tenacious of evil than of good. I will venture to say that for a thousand persons who are tolerably familiar with the crime of Tilly and the misfortunes of Magdeburg, there are not ten who are aware that at the time of the massacre, Otto Guericke, the inventor of the air-pump, and, consequently, one of the fathers of modern science, was burgomaster of the city."

"Your opinion is the same as mine," said Laurence; "but with respect to the particular inscription to which Edgar refers, I think it is intended to denote that the traitor who betrayed his fellow-citizens to the enemy was a former proprietor of the house which it adorns. By-the-bye, I have lately read a legend relating to this very massacre, which, perhaps, you would like to hear."

Maximilian and Edgar having nodded assent, Laurence proceeded thus:

"Early in the morning of that terrible 10th of May, the children at one of the schools of Magdeburg were all on their knees praying that Heaven would avert the threatened calamity. Before the clock had struck eight the alarm-bell informed them that the besieging army had already forced an entrance into the town, and, dismissed by their master, they took up their books and endeavoured to reach their respective homes with all possible speed. One of them, a boy of about ten years of age, named Benjamin Kohl, found the streets so crowded that the prospect of reaching the house of his father, a fisherman, who resided on the banks of the Elbe, was altogether hopeless. To escape the throng of soldiers and fugitives, he left the main thoroughfare, and threaded the narrow lanes and alleys, until he came to the courtyard of a brewery, where he was about to hide himself in a vat, but found it already occupied by a young girl, who implored him to bring her a suit of man's clothes, as a protection against the possible outrages of the soldiery. He gallantly set out to

comply with her request, and presently encountered a number of Croats."

"Of all the peoples who composed the motley imperial army," interposed Maximilian, "the Croats had the reputation of being the most cruel."

"These particular Croats," said Laurence, "seem to have been less sanguinary than the rest. They merely compelled the boy to carry a heavy basket, laden with spoils, to their quarters, and he proceeded thence to his father's house, which was in the immediate vicinity. It was empty, and had evidently been pillaged. An old suit of male apparel had, however, been left behind by the marauders, and taking possession of this, he returned to the brewery, which was now in flames. Nevertheless, he succeeded in finding the girl, who put on the welcome disguise, and they both went to his father's house, one of the few that escaped the ravages of the fire. On the following morning they both fell into the hands of the Croats, who took them to their encampment, where they were compelled to do all sorts of hard work, and after the lapse of a few days suffered them to depart."

"Benjamin and his female friend were lucky in their Croats," exclaimed Edgar.

"They betook themselves to a town called Wanzeleben," continued Laurence, "where one of Benjamin's cousins carried on the trade of a locksmith, and in the house of this worthy man they sojourned, the girl still retaining her male attire, till one fine day a Swedish officer chanced to arrive, who, discovering that she was his sister, took her away in a carriage, and allowed Benjamin to accompany her as a servant. The three persons thus strangely brought together, had not gone far, when they were attacked by some fugitives of the imperial army, who were retreating from the King of Sweden, and made prisoners. Benjamin, however, soon contrived to escape, and returned to the house of his cousin the locksmith. When he had remained there for about a week, he dreamed one night that an angel, robed in white and with golden wings, stood at the side of his bed and called him by name. When, as he thought, he awoke, he saw a small bedchamber, which was brilliantly lighted up, and from the open door of which proceeded the sound of a chorale commonly used on funeral occasions. Rising from his bed he approached the door, and looked into the room, where he saw a black bier, upon which stood a coffin containing an elaborately decorated corpse,

and surrounded by a number of male and female mourners, in whom he recognised his own parents and other acquaintances; but among them was a priest, who stood with an open Bible, and whose face was altogether strange. As for the corpse, it was evidently that of the young lady whom he had found in the brewery. In her hands, which were folded over her bosom, she held a wreath of myrtle intertwined with roses, which presently budded, and produced a large Christmas-tree, lit up according to the prescribed fashion with small candles, but adorned with warlike implements, instead of the customary toys and dainties, and surmounted by white and black flags. When the hymn was ended, the priest approached the corpse and seemed about to speak, when the angel with golden wings who had previously called him, reappeared, and in the bright light which he spread around him, could be easily recognised as the young Swedish officer. Placing himself between the corpse and the priest, the angel touched the lifeless forehead with his finger, declaring that the damsel was not dead, but only sleeping, and the truth of his words was proved when she arose from the coffin, took his arm, and left the assembly."

"This is very like the reproduction of a well-known miracle recorded in the New Testament."

"It is probable that from the New Testament the words of the angel's declaration are borrowed," replied Laurence, "but you will see that the two histories are essentially different, and that we are now treating, not of a real, but of an allegorical death. When the girl had departed with her celestial companion, the whole scene vanished, and Benjamin, still standing at the door, heard the footsteps of the mourners in the distance. He returned to his bed, and on the following morning described all that he had seen to the locksmith's wife, who, in spite of his earnestness, was convinced that he had been only dreaming."

"And her opinion was quite correct, no doubt," remarked Edgar.

"No doubt," echoed Laurence, "but hear how the dream was fulfilled. When Benjamin returned to Magdeburg, or, more properly speaking, to its scanty remains, he found in the possession of several of his friends a picture representing the open coffin, with the maiden's corpse therein, just as he had seen it at Wanzleben, and he heard that a monk had preached a funeral sermon over the city, in which he declared that the Virgin Magdeburg had

been removed from this valley of tears, and had been buried with fire, drums and fifes, in true military style."

"That monk, I suspect, had imperial proclivities," suggested Edgar.

"The sermon was answered by a pamphlet," proceeded Laurence, "which bore the title *Magdeburgum Redivivum* (*Magdeburg Revived*), and had an engraving of the curious picture for its frontispiece. In the following year the Swedish officer came to the city, and his sister was married to a Swedish councillor. Benjamin, of course, was munificently rewarded for his valuable services."

"Whencesoever he derived his reasons," observed Edgar, "the author of the pamphlet decidedly had the better of the monk. Magdeburg, as we all know, is now one of the most important cities of Northern Germany."

"But observe," said Maximilian, very seriously, "how remarkable is the structure of the whole story. Benjamin could not tell where his dream left off, and we are in much the same predicament as Benjamin, for a dreamy nature seems to be imparted to the obvious realities of the story. Why should the young lady, who marries a councillor in the most prosaic manner, be chosen as an allegorical representation of Magdeburg? Why should the Swedish officer, who does not appear to have achieved anything remarkable, take the form of an angel? And how did Benjamin's vision find its way into the brain of the artist who designed the picture?—if, indeed, there was an artist, and the picture did not paint itself."

"I thought I would tell you something you had never heard before," said Laurence. "By way of amends, I will give you a story with which you are familiar, dressed up in a strange costume, and for the purpose I have no occasion to stir an inch from Magdeburg."

"We are ready to accept the boon or endure the infliction," returned Edgar, whom Maximilian accompanied with a nod.

"You must know then," proceeded Laurence, "that in our beloved Magdeburg there are now three houses in the vicinity of each other, respectively named the Black Raven, the White Dove, and the Golden Sun."

"Names that would at once go to the heart of any licensed victualler," exclaimed Edgar.

"Towards the end of the sixteenth century," proceeded Laurence, "a wealthy brewer, who resided on the Stephen's

Bridge (Stephan's Brücke), married his daughter to a merchant, likewise wealthy, who lived in the house in Bone-hewer Bank (Knochenhauer-Ufer), which is now called the Black Raven. When the wedding feast was over, and the bride, leaving the house of her parents, had reached her own home with the bridegroom, she consigned her rings and a valuable necklace to the care of her waiting-maid, who carelessly left them on the dressing-table. On the following morning the precious articles were missed, and as no one had entered the apartment, suspicion naturally fell upon the servant. To the poor girl's protestations of innocence no attention was paid, but she was taken before the magistrates, who, finding that she persisted in denying the theft, put her to the torture. The first pressure of a thumbscrew gave her pain so exquisite that she at once pleaded guilty, a sufficient proof of guilt, as you well know, according to the old law of evidence. When she was asked what she had done with the jewels, she was unable to reply, till the threat of a repetition of the thumbscrew compelled her to say something, and she asserted that they were to be found in her mistress's house. She was accordingly conducted back to the merchant's residence, which was duly searched, but, as of course you expect, nothing was found. More exact information was required, and unless the girl was prepared to give it, she must be content to pay another visit to the magistrates.

"I think I can see what is coming," interposed Edgar.

"Looking round in despair," continued Laurence, "the girl, seeing through an open dormer window the bright sunny sky, raised her hands in supplication, and fervently prayed that Heaven would grant some sign to prove her innocence. Suddenly a white dove, which had been sitting in the chimney corner, flew through the dormer window, and settled on the roof of a neighbour's house. In the rapidity of its flight the bird had loosened a piece of wood in the chimney, which had fallen to the ground, and under this the lost necklace was discovered. While all were looking with amazement at the unexpectedly restored treasure, in hopped an old raven, who belonged to the house, and endeavoured to carry off the necklace in his beak. The real thief was now evidently found, and a search among the nooks in the chimney led to the discovery of the other articles. The girl was, of course, released."

"And I hope compensated for all that

she had undergone," added Maximilian. "Well; here clearly enough we have the story which we once called the Maid and the Magpie, and which we now call La Gazza Ladra, stripped of its domestic interest, and embellished with new scenic effects, the once popular melodrama having fallen into oblivion, while everybody knows more or less of Rossini's opera. But I was taught to believe that the French piece, from which the others were taken, was itself founded upon an incident that actually took place in the village of Palaiseau, not far from Paris, and not so very long ago."

"Good," said Maximilian. "You have started a point that well deserves investigation, though it is by no means impossible that the known thievish propensities of magpies and ravens have led to false accusations of robbery in more places than one."

"Not at all," rejoined Laurence; "I can only say that the Magdeburg tale is told with great apparent accuracy of date and circumstance. The wedding of the brewer's daughter is said to have taken place on the 6th of December, 1598, a day rendered memorable by the shock of an earthquake, which woke up all the citizens at six o'clock in the morning."

"Those excellent folks of Magdeburg," interposed Edgar, "seem to have had most severe teachers of chronology. I wonder whether they have any cause to remember the 5th of November?"

"Then," pursued Laurence, "there are the three houses, the names of which record the principal events in the poor girl's history."

"Stop a moment," objected Maximilian. "The house called the Black Raven is, of course, that which belonged to the newly-married merchant; and the house called the White Dove is that on which the real white dove settled."

"I should have added," interposed Laurence, "that the proprietor of that house, who does not appear in the story, was the owner of that dove."

"Very good," said Maximilian; "but we have not as yet heard why the third house is called the Golden Sun."

"True; there is one particular I had forgotten," returned Laurence. "The third house belonged to the brewer, the bride's father, who, on the night before the discovery, dreamed that he saw over his house two suns, one bright and golden, the other dull and red as blood. These suns approached each other till they at last merged into one glorious luminary, and the brewer

believed that the proof of the girl's innocence was thus prefigured."

"Stop," shouted Edgar. "There is a limit to human forbearance. I am ready to admit that the story of the thievish raven and the helpful dove is founded on fact, and that two of the three houses derive their names from their association with these birds; and I will own that the triumph of truth over falsehood is prettily symbolised by the union of the two suns into one. But I am convinced that the brewer's dream is a spurious addition to the original record. So little has it to do with the tale that it almost escaped the memory of friend Laurence. The girl is acquitted because it is proved that the theft with which she is charged has been committed by a raven; and it did not matter to her one jot whether the brewer had dreamed his dream, or had sat up all night drinking his own beer."

"Then why should the house be called the Golden Sun?" asked Laurence, with a sulky expression of countenance.

"A truly innocent question," cried Edgar. "Can you conceive a more likely subject for a sign? Or are we to believe that the Green Dragon in Bishopsgate is so called because a former proprietor dreamed that a monster of the kind inhabited a cave in Great St. Helen's?"

THE BEST MARKET.

Buy cheap, but sell dear! such is the golden rule, the keystone and root-principle of that important branch of political economy which has reference to a nation's commerce. No apothegm of Adam Smith, no maxim of Bentham or Ricardo, is more firmly adhered to by the faithful among their followers than is this pithy formula, the Open Sesamé, if rightly used, wherewith to unlock the treasure-chamber of the world's wealth. The soundness of the principle, from a mercantile point of view, is beyond cavil. If we could all deal at enormous profits, and with solvent and constant customers, for what we had ourselves purchased at small cost, a commercial millennium would certainly have been realised. Unhappily, however, what is bought cheap is often not worth the buying, while, on the other hand, the auriferous harvest of high prices is apt to be terribly choked by the crop of bad debts that spring up, weed-like, amid the golden grain. Prejudice, ignorance, bad laws, and the tyranny of custom, combine to keep the

wheels of the chariot of commerce very much in the old ruts, and the choice of a market, like that of a profession or a wife, is not always to be justified on reasonable grounds.

It is to the Morningland that we must turn for the earliest conception of a market. The East was indeed the true cradle of trade, and to the Semitic race, above all, belongs the palm of early mercantile enterprise. In the days of Herodotus, as in ours, the hardy Arab traders were wont to push their way deep into Africa, and to plod across the limitless plains of Asia. The Moormen's flotillas swarmed among the Spice Islands, or flew down the Persian Gulf before the breath of the monsoon, long before a Venetian keel had traced its silvery furrow in the blue Adrian Sea. Every year saw their caravans crossing desert and mountain to exchange African ivory and Tyrian purple, the pearls of Ceylon, and the frankincense of Nejd, for the silver and the wool of Europe, Indian gold, and Chinese silk. Samarcand and Bassora, Yashkend, and Trebizond, and Bagdad, had their gigantic fairs, mighty gatherings of travelled merchants and valuable merchandise, at a time when European commerce was but in a humble, huckstering way of business.

The best markets, at the dawn of history, must certainly have been Assyria and Egypt. Both of these, but especially the latter, were importing countries, not exporting ones. No doubt they paid, in wheat, in the precious metals, and perhaps in cloth, for the raw materials and the simple manufactures of their ruder neighbours; but what drew venders to Memphis and Nineveh was the steadiness of the demand for commodities suited to the dense population of a wealthy and orderly empire. Persia, rising on the ruins of Egyptian and Babylonish supremacy, was next the emporium of the trading world. The Turkish pashas—those three-tailed bashaws of whose pomp and pride our forefathers used to talk so much—were but plagiarists of those magnificent bureaucrats, those glorified placemen, who, under Xerxes and Darius, exercised viceregal sway over Western Asia. Whatever could minister to the pleasures of these potent personages was welcome at their provincial seats of government, and still more so at Persepolis, where the several streams of tribute flowed from a hundred subject lands into the monarch's treasury.

Grecian wars and Macedonian conquests having been followed by the corruption and

the fall of Persic and Hellenic powers alike before the Roman eagles, Old Rome and New Rome, the haughty mother-city on her seven-hilled throne, and her more beauteous daughter, lulled to sleep by the murmur of the Bosphorus, could boast of such markets as till then the world had never seen. The immense accumulation of capital, which was a common feature of both Byzantium and the hoary city of Romulus, turned, to use a modern phrase, the exchange in favour of the seats of Roman sway, and long after Constantinople had been hemmed in by the tide of Turkish incursion, her mart competed advantageously with those of the commercial republics of Italy. The Middle Ages awoke to a conception of the real nature of a market, differing from any that had been known to the ancients of the classic world. Imperial Rome, for instance, had been a good customer alike to the sword-cutlers and clothiers of Spain, and to the goldsmiths and statuaries of Greece, absorbing the wool and wine of one country, the ivory and ostrich-feathers of another, and the marble and jasper of a third; buying slaves and corn, purple and bullion, indiscriminately. But then Rome, the hive whence poured forth an endless swarm of harpy-officials, took with the right hand what she paid with the left, and her purchases were for her own consumption, and made with no view to re-exporting. The shrewd traders of Genoa and Venice, the long-headed chapmen of the Hanse Towns, were rather brokers and middlemen than caterers, as their pagan predecessors had been, for the supply of a privileged class, and through their industry the productions of East and West were for the first time freely bartered wherever merchants could safely congregate.

The meddling of mediæval kings and of mediæval parliaments with the due course of trade caused much of actual harm, and inconvenience to a still greater amount. These august persons and dignified assemblies had yet to be taught that commerce finds its level with the same certainty as water, and that it is almost as idle to make laws for the regulation of traffic, as to legislate against the ebb and flow of the tides. Yet every year or two saw a fresh crop of enactments, forbidding, under pains and penalties, the buying of commodities that were cheap or good, and enforcing the most stringent doctrines of protection on behalf of such native monopolists as were licensed to sell what was for the most part artificially dear, and

not infrequently bad. It is to be hoped that the London citizen of the Middle Ages, for example, was used to vexations interference with his business, as eels are said to be familiar with the process of skinning, for in theory, at least, he was never out of leading-strings. Parliament kindly prescribed with whom he should deal, and on what terms, often fixing a maximum price, which it was punishable to exceed. Parliament considerably settled the wages of his journeymen, and the treatment of his prentice. The collective wisdom of the country regulated alike his bargains and the number of dishes at his dinner, just as it allowed his wife to wear certain furs and laces, and no others, and ordained what materials and trimming should be employed in his daughter's Sunday kirtle.

Had not trade been a patient, good-tempered beast of burden, and somewhat stiff-necked to boot, the poor thing would certainly have been worried and fretted to death during that long period which she passed in statutory harness, with privilege for ever cracking a legislative whip around her unoffending ears. The nation's rulers were always decreeing some fresh prohibition, and, so far as foreign commerce went, seemed to be animated by a strong desire to eat the cake of profit and to have it too. Wool, the great staple of English exports, was often subject to a writ of no exeat regno. Then, on pain of fine, imprisonment, ear-cropping, and the pillory, nobody was to carry "the king's coin" forth of the realm, so that, had not blundering laws a wholesome tendency to lie fallow, all dealings beyond sea would have come to a dead-lock, on account of the impossibility of paying the foreigner for his goods.

Patriotism, or rather prejudice, masquerading under the garb of that noble quality, has often thinned the attendance at a good market, for the benefit of an inferior one. The Methuen Treaty, in which, by one stroke of a pen, whole generations of well-to-do Britons were doomed to port wine and the goût, is a salient instance of this. So was the Spartan severity with which our grandfathers flogged the Master Tommies and Master Jackys of a bygone generation until they consented to eat fat, for the good of their country, as they were told. The British grazier and the British butcher took a professional pride in the rearing and sale of extravagantly fat beasts—of tallow at the price of meat—and the British schoolboy was expected to adapt, under the gentle persuasion of cane or whipcord, his youthful palate to the adiposities of the

national roast beef. Long before this there had been a fierce fight to keep calico and muslin, fabrics woven by tawny heathens in outlandish parts, out of the country. And then came the long wars against France, the century or so of high charges, confirmed insularism, and warped taste, when we learned to be actually proud of the ill-assorted colours, the grotesque bonnets and queer gowns in which ladies figured, and were vain of our hideous ornaments and heavy furniture, our dock-tailed horses and quaint music, shut out as we then were from wholesome interchange of ideas with the world beyond.

Thanks to free trade and facilities for travel, we in England are now creditably free from prejudices that were dear to our fathers, and the counterparts of which exist among our neighbours. Our very millers admit that American flour is more nutritious, weight for weight, than the best wheat meal that Kent or Norfolk can produce. Much of our paper now comes from Angoulême, and some from Berlin, whereas our ancestors indited their close-written letters on no paper that did not bear the stamp of Bath. French ribbons and gloves, and all those pretty toys and trifles which Paris so well supplied before her cunning workers exchanged their tools for torch and rifle, we were always ready to buy, but the purchase of locomotives from a Gallic factory argued some originality on the part of the importer. The French, who believe in Manchester shirtings and glossy Melton cloth, and who prefer to lay down our cheap rails, and to warm themselves by our sea-borne coal, have been slow to recognise the merits of our Staffordshire china. That Sheffield eclipses St. Etienne in razors and penknives they admit, but the careful French housewife has not yet learned to keep her jams and preserves in earthenware from the potteries, and to abandon her own greasy jars, glazed with villainous lead. English lace adorns the most splendid of French brides, but then it is the real hand-made article from the bobbins of Honiton maidens, and the artistic web from the Nottingham looms is disregarded by economical buyers in favour of an inferior imitation from Roubaix.

It would be very hard to persuade any one belonging to a French speaking race, Gaul, Belgian, or South Swiss, that fairly good silks and velvets can be bought in England or in Italy. The belief in Lyons, and in Lyons alone, is one too deeply rooted to give Macclesfield, and Genoa, and Spital-fields a chance in most continental markets.

And beyond doubt the silken city on the banks of its two fair rivers is willing to furnish any client, who will pay like a prince, with a robe that a princess might be proud to wear. Let money be no object, and Lyons is the best mart for stiff brocades, gorgeous with flowers, for sheeny glacées at ever so much a yard, and for velvets as glossy as a bird's plumage. But each year beholds a larger admixture of thread, wool, and cotton in the inferior qualities that leave the gigantic manufactories, and their humble competitors on the wrong side of the frontier vainly base their claims on the fact that they are actually silk, as well as nominally. It is not only in Athens that an audience sometimes prefers the squeaking of the accustomed mimic to the unsophisticated squeal of the genuine pig.

That jewellery sells well in Russia and the United States is pretty well known by those who are chiefly concerned, although few diamonds reach St. Petersburg without being immediately reset, the preference being always given to the native taste of Muscovite jewellers. But it is perhaps more remarkable that the price of precious stones should rule higher in the East than in Europe. A Stamboul pasha pays more for the diamonds that encircle his pipes and coffee-cups than if he had bought them in Paris, while many soldiers who brought back their hoarded "loot" to England, after the Indian mutiny, were disgusted to find the large emeralds and rubies taken from slain enemies valued at perhaps a third less in London than in Calcutta. Birds'-nests and sea slugs, the most profitable cargo that can be shipped to a Chinese port, were dainties little regarded in their habitat of the Malayan Archipelago, and opium, on the Chinese consumption of which our Indian government, with some uneasy qualms of conscience, relies as a main prop of the exchequer, was once hardly worth cultivating. Cornish copper, once commanding a fancy price, has been cruelly undersold by South American and Australian metal, and kelp has withered in the imposing presence of barilla. Nobody dreams, now-a-days, of planting a vineyard in Britain, yet the old English monks contrived to press a sort of petit bleu from old English grapes.

Unpleasant newspaper statements have been current, now and again, as to the dirty and matted condition of the hair, itself intrinsically coarse, which North Germany and Russia send us to be wrought into chignons. But then London, with all its wealth, is by no means the best market for human

hair. Almost all that is dainty and delicate in the way of these capillary wares finds itself bespoken for Paris. The great French dealers are like so many commercial cuttles-fish, throwing out their prehensile arms into every land where fine hair is to be bought, and their agents hunt especially for exceptionally long tresses of the fashionable tints, such as saffron yellow, golden, red gold, and flaxen, in every nook and corner of Central Europe or the north of Italy, whence comes many a sunny lock, such as the great masters of the brush loved to paint. John Bull has commonly to put up, for the wear of Mrs. and the Misses Bull, with an article of inferior quality, shorn from the heads of unwashed dwellers beside the Baltic, and shipped in the rough.

England has, however, a magnetic attraction for all eatable commodities, and we undoubtedly depend more on foreign sources of supply for the furnishing forth of our tables, than any country of modern times has done. It might be over-curious to inquire whether there is any mysterious connexion between the Celtic races and the rearing of poultry, but what eggs we do not buy from France we draw from Ireland. The British Dame Partlet does but little towards satisfying the Gargantuan appetite of the nation for eggs. Our consumption of butter is enormous, and although there is comparatively a far greater acreage of grass land in the British isles than in any part of Continental Europe, still does the produce of our dairies need to be supplemented by incessant importation. For us the hardy little Breton cows crop the sweet grass of the uplands of Armorica. For us the Flemish churns are busy throughout the sandy stretch of the Campine flats, and all along the low sky-line where the grey sea and the yellow dyke-mounds border the monotonous expanse of the green grazing grounds, the peasant knows that his milk-pails are filled for the behoof of his English customers. The red kine feeding in the rich meadows of Holland, the fairy cattle scrambling among the Kerry mountains, even the classical-looking herds of white or dappled cows that stand fetlock deep in the tall rye-grass of Lombardy, contribute to the supply of the British butterman. Sheep and cattle, turkeys by the drove, and geese by the flock, corn and cheese, Norman apples and Touraine wall-fruit, Flanders rabbits and Dutch wild-fowl, early potatoes from Portugal and garden stuff from Ghent, are all swept, like small fish in a net, into the omnivorous maw of wealthy London.

For some edibles, no doubt, Paris, the old, lavish, glittering Paris of the ancient days of piping peace and prosperity that now seem so far remote, afforded a better market than even London. Probably some three-fourths, at a moderate computation, of the truffle crop of Europe found its way to Paris kitchens. Almost all the ortolans were sent up from the vineyards, where they feasted, to gratify the palates of Parisian diners-out. Mushrooms and shell-fish, and sea-fish in general, and early vegetables and untimely fruits from Africa, were all sure to command the highest price in Paris. A lobster in Paris was worth a great deal more than a lobster in London. The living crustacea, in their black armour flecked with gold, sprawling and feebly closing their impotent pincers on the marble counter of a West-end fishmonger, might, unboiled, have blushed a glowing scarlet at the contrast between their price and the fancy value which such a restaurateur as Chevet set upon their brother lobsters. Lutetia bought our trout and salmon, too, in and out of season, with a noble contempt for fence months and fishery laws, and if there was danger of killing the goose that laid the golden eggs, or, in other words, of improving the breed of salmon out of our waters altogether, so much the worse, doubtless, for the goose. It will need some breathing time, however, before the Paris market again becomes what it has been, the Mecca of every enterprising purveyor.

Trade with absolutely savage countries is necessarily gainful in the extreme, but with heavy drawbacks as to risk, fatigue, and contingent expenses. The immense profits so quietly made by the Hudson's Bay Company are a more creditable example of this than any which New Spain, with all its dazzling accounts of silver bars piled up, and gold dust measured forth in gourds, can point to. It is better to exchange blankets and gunpowder for bearskins and beaver fur, with tribes of orderly Indians, not discontented with the bad bargains they made, than to wring treasure from the enforced toil of myriads of gentle slaves, poor human gnomes driven at the sword's point to the fatal labours of the mine. Ivory and ostrich feathers are perhaps the most profitable articles of the legitimate trade with Africa, and the former is especially lucrative, but then it must be sought for by large armed parties, in malarious wildernesses, where provisions have to be painfully carried on men's backs, where the pestilence stalks in the noon-day, and where barbarous wars, probable

mutiny, certain desertion, sickness, and the caprice of negro Neros, mad with drink and uncontrolled power, and influenced for evil by the African nightmare of witchcraft, have to be set down on the debit side of the account.

No doubt the nearly extinct slave trade of the west coast, and the yet flourishing branch of that shameful traffic which has its seat on the east coast, of the African continent, had singular attractions for the greedy and unscrupulous dealers, Christian or Mahometan, who are engaged in it. The simple fact that a miserable gun of the cheapest make, some fifteen shilling musket from Birmingham, not proved at the Tower, and with great capabilities of bursting, would in Guinea purchase a powerful man in the prime of youth, and that the same man would fetch a hundred pounds, hard cash, in Cuba, was of itself a great temptation to those who were eager to grow rich speedily. Human flesh and blood that are unlucky enough to be covered by a black skin, are still only too saleable, and Arabia, Persia, and Egypt are now the best customers in this iniquitous traffic, as Brazil and Jamaica once were.

The strangest instance of an opportunity for sudden gain which the world has known since the discoveries of Columbus, was probably afforded by the re-opening of commercial intercourse between long-sealed Japan and busy, bustling Christendom, when it was discovered that the relative value of silver, as compared with gold, which had risen so greatly for hundreds of years in Europe, was still, with those peculiar islanders, at the old standard familiar to ourselves in the days of the early Plantagenets. Some fortunes, no doubt, were rapidly and silently made, but Japan is a strictly-governed land, and her people a quick-witted race, and the harvest of silver itzebeus at base price soon came to an untimely ending.

THE YELLOW FLAG.

BY EDMUND YATES,

AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP," "NOBODY'S FORTUNE," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER II. THINKING IT OUT.

MR. HENRICH WETTER did not remain long in Pollington-terrace on the day of his introduction to Mrs. Claxton. He saw at once that Mrs. Claxton was delicate and out of health, and he was far too clever a man of the world to let the occasion of his

first visit be remembered by her as one when she was bored or wearied. While he remained, he discussed pleasantly enough those agreeable nothings, which make up the conversation of society, in a soft mellifluous voice, and exhibited an amount of deference to both ladies.

On taking his leave, Mr. Wetter rather thought that he had created a favourable impression upon Alice, while Pauline thought just the contrary. But the fact was that Alice was not impressed much either one way or the other. The man was nothing to her, no man was anything to her now, or ever would be again, she thought, but she supposed he was gentlemanly, and she knew he was Madame Du Terte's cousin, and she was grateful for the kindness which Madame Du Terte had shown to her. So when Mr. Wetter rose to depart, Alice feebly put out her little hand to him, and expressed a hope that he would come again to see his cousin. And Mr. Wetter bowed over her hand, and much to Pauline's disgust declared he should have much pleasure in taking Mrs. Claxton at her word. His farewell to Pauline was not less ceremonious, though he could scarcely resist grinning at her when Mrs. Claxton's back was turned. And so he went his way.

It accorded well with Pauline's notions that immediately after Mr. Wetter's departure, Alice should complain of fatigue, and should intimate her intention of retiring into her own room, for the fact was that she herself was somewhat dazed and disturbed by the occurrences of the day, and was longing for an opportunity of being alone and thinking them out at her leisure.

So, as soon as she had the room to herself, Pauline reduced the light of the lamp and turned the key in the door—not that she expected any intrusion, it was merely done out of habit—and then pushing the chairs and the table aside, made a clear path for herself in front of the fire, and commenced walking up and down it steadily. Pauline Lunelle! She had not heard the name for years. What scornful emphasis that man laid on it as he pronounced it. How he had boasted of his money and position: with what dire vengeance had he threatened her if she refused to aid him in his schemes! Of what those schemes were he had given her no idea, but they were pretty nearly certain to be bad and vicious. She recollects the opinion she had had of Henrich Wetter in the old days at Marseilles, and it was not

a flattering one. People considered him an eligible match, and were greatly astonished when she had refused his hand, she, a poor dame du comptoir, to give up the opportunity of an alliance with such a rising man! But she had her feeling about it then, and she had it now.

It was, then, as she suspected during their interview at Rose Cottage. Wetter had seen Alice, had been attracted by her beauty, and had found, as he imagined, in Pauline an instrument ready made to his hand to aid him in his purpose. That acquaintance with her past life gave him a firm hold upon her, of which he would not hesitate to avail himself. Was it necessary that she should be thus submissive, thus bound to do what she was bid, however repulsive it might be to her? There was nothing of actual guilt or shame in that past life which Monsieur Wetter could bring against her; she had been merry, light, and frivolous, as was usual with people of her class—ah, of her class—the sting was there! Would Martin Gurwood have suffered her to hold the position in that household, would he have trusted or borne with her at all, had he known that in her early days she had been the dame du comptoir at a restaurant in a French provincial town?

How insultingly that man had spoken of her dead husband! Her dead husband? Yes, Tom Durham was dead! She had long since ceased to have any doubt on that point. There was no motive that she could divine for his keeping himself in concealment, and she had for some time been convinced that all he had said to her was true, and that his plan of action was genuine, but that he had been drowned in attempting to carry it out. Where was the anguish that six months ago she would have experienced in acknowledging the truth of this conviction? Why does the idea of Tom Durham's death now come to her with an actual sense of relief? Throughout her life Pauline, however false to others, had been inexorably true to herself, and that she now feels not merely relief but pleasure in believing Tom Durham to be dead, she frankly acknowledges.

Whence this change, this apparently inexplicable alteration in her ideas? She must have been fond of Tom Durham, for had she not toiled for him and suffered for his sake? How is it, then, that she could bring herself to think of his death with something more than calmness? Because she loved another man, whom to win would be life, redemption, rehabilitation,

to keep whom in ignorance of the contamination of her past she would do or suffer anything! There was but one way in which that past could be learned, and that was through Wetter. He alone held the key to that mystery, and to him, therefore, must the utmost court be paid—his will must be made her law. Stay, though! If Monsieur Wetter's projects are as base as she is half inclined to suspect them, by aiding them in ever so little, even by keeping silence about her suspicions, she betrays Martin's confidence and injures some of his best feelings!

What a terrible dilemma for her to be placed in! In that household she has accepted a position of trust, and is, as it were, accredited by Martin as Alice's guardian. In that position it was her duty to shield the young girl in every possible way, and not even to have permitted such a person as she believed Monsieur Wetter to be to have been introduced into the house. Being herself the actual means of introducing him, had she not virtually betrayed the trust reposed in her, and yet—and yet! Let her once set this man at defiance, and he would not scruple to utter words which would have the effect of exiling her from the house, and taking from her every chance of seeing the man for whom alone in the world she had a gentle feeling. A word from Wetter would be sufficient utterly to annihilate the fairy palace of hope upon which during the last few days she had been speculating, and to send her forth a greater outcast than ever upon the world.

No, that could not be expected of her, it would be too much! The glimpse of happiness which she had recently enjoyed, unsubstantial though it was, a mere figment of her own brain, a dream, a delusion, had yet so far impressed her, that she could not willingly bring herself to part with it; nor, as she felt after more mature reflection, was there any necessity for her so doing. She might safely temporise; the occasion when she would be called upon to act decisively was not imminent; the performers were only just placed en scène, and there could be no possible chance of a catastrophe for some time to come. There was very little chance that Alice Claxton, modest and retiring, filled with the memories of her "dear old John," to whom she was always referring, would be disposed to accept the proffered attention of such a man as Monsieur Wetter. Whether Monsieur Wetter succeeded or not with Alice would entirely

depend upon himself. He could not possibly know anything of her former life, and could therefore bring no undue influence to bear in his favour, and Pauline thought, even suppose, as was most likely, that Alice repulsed him, he could not turn round upon her. She had done her best, she had given him the introduction he required, and if he did not prosper in his suit no blame could be attached to her. Matters must remain so, she thought, and she would wait the result with patience.

And Martin Gurwood, the man for whom alone in the world she had a gentle feeling, the man whom she loved—yes, whom she loved! She was not ashamed, but rather proud to acknowledge it to herself; the man with the shy retiring manner, the delicate appearance, the soft voice, so different from all the other men with whom her lot in life had thrown her—the very atmosphere seemed to change as she thought of him. How well she recollects her first introduction to him in the grim house in Great Walpole-street, and the distrust, almost amounting to dislike, with which she then regarded him! She had intended pitting herself against him then; she would now be only too delighted for the opportunity of showing him how faithfully she could serve him. Distrust! Ay, she remembered the suspicion she had entertained, that there was some secret on his mind which he kept hidden from the world. She thought so still! It pleased her to think so, for in her, with all her realism and practical business purpose, there was a strong impression of superstition and imagination, and that unconscious link between them, the fact that they each had something to conceal, seemed to afford her ground for hope.

Yes, her position towards Martin, though not quite what she might have desired, was by no means a bad one. He had had to trust her, he had had to acknowledge her intellectual superiority; he, a lonely man gradually growing accustomed to women's society. He hated it at first, but now he liked it; missed it when he was forced to absent himself; she had heard him say as much. She seated herself where Alice had previously sat, and leaned her arm upon the table, supporting her chin with her hand. Might not he, she thought, might not he come to care for her, to love her—well enough? That would be all she could expect, all she could hope—well enough! A few years ago she would have scorned the idea; even up to within the last few weeks

she would not have accepted any half-hearted affection. A passionate domineering woman, with the hot southern blood running in her veins, unaccustomed, in that way, at all events, to be checked or stayed, she must have had all or none; but now what a difference! Her love was now tempered by discretion, her common sense was allowed its due influence; and she was too wise, and in her inmost heart too sad to expect a passionate attachment from the man whom she had set up as her idol. In the new-born humility which has come from this true love she will be satisfied to give that, and to take in return whatever he may have to offer her.

Married to Martin Gurwood, to the man whom she loved! Could such a lot possibly be in store for her? Could she dare to dream of such a haven of rest, after her life-long suffering with storms and trials? She was free now; of that there was no doubt; and he himself had acknowledged her energy and talent. The position which she then held was in the eyes of the world no doubt inferior to his—would be made more inferior if he accepted his share of the wealth which his mother had offered him. But he is not a man, unless she has read him wrongly, if he would otherwise marry her, to be deterred by social considerations; he is far beyond and above such mean and petty weaknesses. In her calm review of the position occupied by each of them, Pauline could see but one hopeless obstacle to her chance of inducing Martin Gurwood to marry her—that sole obstacle would be another affection. Another affection. Good Heaven!—Alice!

The suspicion went through her like a knife. Her brain seemed to reel, her arms dropped powerless on the table before her, and she sank back in the chair.

Alice! Let her send her thoughts back to the different occasions when she had seen Alice and Martin Gurwood together; let her dwell upon his tone and manner to the suffering girl, and the way in which she appeared to be affected by them. When did they first meet? Not until comparatively recently, their first interview being confessedly that which she, unseen by them, had watched from the narrow lane. In the room at Pollington-terrace, by the dull red light shed by the expiring embers, Pauline saw it as plainly as she had seen it in reality; the pitying expression in Martin's face on that occasion, the eyes full of sorrowful regard, the hands that sought to raise her prostrate body, but the motion of

which was checked, as they were folded across his breast. He was not in love with her then. Pauline recollects making the remark to herself at the time, but since then what opportunities had they not had of meeting, how constantly they had been thrown together, and how, as proved by the anxiety he had shown, and the trouble he has taken on her behalf, his sympathy and regard for the desolate girl had deepened and increased!

Why should she doubt Martin Gurwood's disinterestedness in this matter? Why should she ascribe to him certain feelings by which he may possibly never have been influenced? He was a man of large heart and kindly sympathies by nature, developed by his profession and by his constant intercourse with the weak and suffering. He would doubtless have befriended any woman in similar circumstances who might have been brought under his notice. Befriended? Yes, but not, as Pauline honestly allowed to herself, in the same way. His words would have been kind, and his purse would have been open; but in all his kindness to Alice there was a certain delicate consideration, which long before she even thought it would trouble her, Pauline had frequently remarked, and which she understood and appreciated all the better, perhaps, because she had had no experience of any such treatment in her life. That consideration spoke volumes as to the character of Martin's feelings towards Alice, and Pauline's heart sank within her as she thought of it.

Meanwhile she must suffer quietly, and hope for the best; that was all left for her to do. She was surprised at the calmness of her despair. In the old days her fiery jealousy of Tom Durham had leapt forward at the slightest provocation, rendering her oftentimes the laughing-stock of her husband and his ribald friends; now, when the first gathering of the suspicion crossed her mind that a man, far dearer to her than ever her first husband had been, was in love with another woman, she accepted the position, not without dire suffering, it is true, but with calmness and submission. It might not be the case after all. From what little she had seen of Alice, Pauline scarcely suspected her of being the right stamp of woman to understand or appreciate Martin Gurwood. She had been accustomed to be petted and spoiled by an old man, who was her slave; she was not intended by nature to be much more than a spoilt child, a doll to be petted and played

with, and the finer traits in Martin's character would be lost upon her. She was grateful to him as her benefactor, of course, but she had never exhibited any other feeling towards him, and Pauline did not think that she would allow her gratitude to have much influence over her future. Moreover,—but, as Pauline knew perfectly well, little reliance was to be placed upon that—she professed herself inconsolable for her recent loss, and talked of perpetual widowhood as her only possible condition, so that Pauline thought that there were two chances, either of which would suit her—one that Alice would never marry again, the other that she might marry some one else in preference to Martin Gurwood.

It was growing late, and Pauline, wearied and exhausted, extinguished the lamp, and made the best of her way up the staircase in the dark. As she passed by the door of the room in which Alice slept, she thought she heard a stifled cry. She paused for an instant, and listened; the cry was repeated, followed by a low moan. Alarmed at this, Pauline tried the door; it was unfastened, and yielded to her touch. Hurrying in, she found Alice sitting upright in her bed, her hair streaming over her shoulders, and an expression of terror in her face.

"What on earth is the matter, poor child?" cried Pauline, putting her arm round the girl, and peering into the darkness. "What has disturbed you in your sleep?"

"Nothing," said Alice, placing her hand upon her heart to still its beating; "nothing—at least, only a foolish fancy of my own. Do not leave me," she cried, as Pauline moved away from her.

"I am not going to leave you, dear, be sure of that," said Pauline; "I am only going to get a light in order that I may be certain where I am and what I am about. There," she said, as, after striking a match and lighting the gas, she returned to the bed. "Now you shall tell me what frightened you and caused you to cry out so loudly."

"Nothing but a dream," said Alice. "Is it not ridiculous? But I could not help it, indeed I could not. I cried out involuntarily, and had no idea of what had happened until you entered the room."

"And what was the dream that caused so great an effect?" asked Pauline, seating herself on the bed and taking Alice's trembling hand in hers.

"A very foolish one," said Alice. "I thought I was in the garden at Hendon,

walking with dear old John and talking"—here her voice broke and the tears rolled down her face—"just as I used to talk to him, very stupidly no doubt, but he enjoyed it and so did I, and we liked it better, I think, because no one else understood it. We were crossing the lawn and going down towards the shrubbery, when a cold chilling wind seemed to blast across from the churchyard, and immediately afterwards a man rushed up—I could not see his face, for he kept it averted—and pulled John away from me and held him struggling in his arms. I could not tell now how it came about, but I found myself at the man's feet, imploring him to let John come to me. And the man told me to look up, and when I looked up John was gone, vanished, melted away! And when I called after him the man bade me hold my peace, for that John was not what I had fancied him to be, but, on the contrary, the worst enemy I had ever had. Then the scene changed, and I was in an hospital, or some place of the sort, and long rows of white beds and sick people lying in them. And in one of them was John, so altered, so shrunken, pale, and wobegone; and when he saw me he bowed his head and lifted up his hands in supplication, and all he said was, "Forget! forget," in such a piteous tone, and I thought he did not know me, and in my anguish, I screamed out and woke. Was it not a strange dream?"

"It was indeed," said Pauline, meditatively, "but all dreams are—"

"Stay," cried Alice interrupting her. "I forgot to tell you that when I was struggling with the man who kept me away from John, I managed to look at his face, and it was the face of the gentleman who came here last night—your cousin, you know."

"Ay," said Pauline, looking at her quietly. "There is nothing very strange in that. You see so few people that a fresh face is apt to be photographed on your mind, and thus my unfortunate cousin was turned into a monster in your dream. Do you think you are sufficiently composed now for me to leave you?"

"I'd rather you would stay a little longer, if you don't mind," said Alice, laying her hand on her friend's. "I know I'm very foolish, but I scarcely think I could get to sleep if I were left just now."

"I am not at all sure," said Pauline, gently, "that we have been right in keeping you so much secluded as we have done hitherto, and in declining the civilities and hospitalities which have been offered to us by all the people here about. I am afraid you are getting into rather a morbid state, Alice, and that this dream of yours is a proof of it."

"I cannot bear the notion of seeing any one else," said Alice.

"That is another proof of the morbid state to which I was referring," said Pauline. "You would very soon get over that if the ice were once broken."

"But surely we see enough people! Whenever he is in town, Mr. Gurwood comes to see us."

Pauline's eyes were fixed full on Alice's face as she pronounced Martin's name, but they did not discover the slightest flush on the girl's cheeks, nor was there the least alteration in her tone.

"True," said Pauline; "and Mr. Statham comes to see us now and then."

"Oh yes," said Alice. "I suppose whenever he has nothing more important to do; but Mr. Statham's time is valuable, and very much filled up, I have heard Mr. Gurwood say."

"But even Mr. Statham and Mr. Gurwood," said Pauline, forcing herself to smile, "seen at long intervals, give us scarcely sufficient intercourse with the outer world to prevent our falling into what I call a perfectly morbid state, and on the next visit paid us by either of these gentlemen, I shall lay my ideas before them, and ask for authority to enlarge our circle. Now, dear, you are dropping with sleep, and all your terror seems thoroughly subsided. So, good-night. I will leave the light burning to drive away the evil dreams."

As Pauline bent over Alice, the girl threw her arms round her friend's neck, and kissing her, thanked her warmly for her attention.

"A strange dream, indeed," said Pauline, as she walked slowly up the staircase to her own room. "She was told that old John, as she calls him, instead of being what she always imagined, was really her worst enemy. And the man who told her so proved to be Henrich Wetter! A very strange dream, indeed!"